

## Applying for a Student Route Visa Outside of the UK

On the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 the new Student Route visa replaced the Tier 4 (General) Student visa route.

In order to apply for the Student Route visa you must have a current passport and obtain a Valid Confirmation of Acceptance (CAS) document and meet the 70 points requirement:

- Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) – 50 points – LJMU will issue your CAS
- Sufficient money to cover your tuition fees and living costs (or evidence of official sponsorship) - 10 points.
- English Language Requirement – 10 points.

### Your CAS (50 Points)

You must have a CAS before making an application as a Student. A CAS is an electronic document that LJMU issues to you when we make you an unconditional offer.

LJMU will send you with the information used to generate your CAS called the 'CAS statement' which contains your unique CAS reference number. You will need your CAS reference number to enter onto your online Student application form. The CAS statement itself is not required for your Student application, but it gives you all of the information about your course and Student sponsor, and some of the information about money that you need to complete your Student application form. Your CAS is valid for 6 months.

### English Language Requirements (10 Points)

Student sponsors are required to assess your ability to read, write, speak and understand English. LJMU will tell you how we will assess your English and the level of English you must have, which is subject to minimum levels set by the Home Office.

English Language is assessed in one of the following ways:

- If you are a national of a majority English-speaking country or have a qualification taught in an English-speaking country
- If you have already met this requirement successfully in a previous application made either inside or outside the UK. This requirement can only be satisfied if the level of English in the previous application was at the required level for the current application.
- You have obtained either a GCSE, A Level or Scottish equivalent in English language or literature following education at a UK school whilst below the age of 18.

### Maintenance (10 Points)

You will need evidence you meet the strict [maintenance requirements](#). Information about this is contained in this information sheet.

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## When should I apply for my Student Visa?

- You should apply for your visa in plenty of time for your course starting
- You must apply before you travel to the UK (although see [I Have a Student Visa Which is Still Valid](#) if you have a current valid visa).
- You should apply no more than six months before the start date of your course. This has changed recently -- under the old Tier 4 visa route it was no more than 3 months before the start date
- No later than six months after your CAS was issued

## I Have a Tier 4/Student Visa which is Still Valid

The new Student visa route from 5 October 2020 does not affect existing Tier 4 visas. If you already have a Tier 4 visa you can use it to enter the UK at any point during its validity to start or continue the studies for which it was issued.

If you do intend to travel to the UK on Tier 4 visa, we advise that you make these checks before using it to travel to the UK:

First, check that you are eligible to apply under the Student route within the UK (see [Applying for a Student Route Visa in the UK](#)). If not, you will need to apply from your home country.

You should also:

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- check with LJMU that you have not been reported to the Home Office as having finished your most recent course early, interrupted your studies, or having not enrolled. If LJMU has reported one of these matters, it is likely that your visa might already have been 'curtailed' and is no longer valid
- Carry in your hand luggage evidence to show the Border Force Officer that you will be making a new immigration application before your current permission expires such as your CAS and financial evidence

## ATAS

- For some courses you are required to get ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) clearance. You should make sure you do this in plenty of time. Your LJMU Offer Letter will state if you are required to apply for ATAS. If you are, you will need to do this before LJMU will issue you with a CAS.
- ATAS applications can be made here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

## Where do I apply for my Student visa?

You should apply for the student visa in the country in which you are living. All applications for the student visa are made online [HERE](#) (apart from nationals of North Korea).

You can start the application at any point as the application will save your information as you go. However, you will not be able to submit the application form without a Valid CAS and you should ensure you have all the documents that are required for your visa application ready at the time you apply.

Most UK Visa Application Centres (VACs) have resumed services where local restrictions allow, following closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic. For updates to the status of VACs in your country check [Find a Visa Application Centre](#).

Submit your application at the nearest British Embassy, High Commission, VFS-UK or Consular Office (British diplomatic post) which issues visas or entry clearance. Ensure you have all the relevant documentation you need to attend the appointment.

## How much does the application cost?

It costs £348 for the visa application per applicant. Some of the Visa Application Centres (VACs) charge an additional fee to process your visa application. It may be possible at your VAC to pay extra for a priority or super priority service to get a decision quicker.

## The Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)

The IHS entitles you to use free healthcare services under the National Health Service. The fee is £470 a year for students coming to study a course of 6 months or more. If your visa includes part of a year that is six months or less you will be charged an additional 50% of the annual charge for this period (£235). If your visa includes part of a year that is more than six months, you will have to pay the full annual charge for this period.

You can also use the [Immigration Health Surcharge tool](#) on the UK Government website to check how much you will have to pay. The Student visa application form will calculate the amount that you need to pay and ask you to pay it before you can complete your application. After you have done this you will receive an email containing your IHS reference number. This number will automatically be included on your application form cover sheet.

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## Supporting document checklist:

Please note this is a general guidance list. Please check your UKVI account for a list of documents you will need to submit to support your application.

- ✓ Your completed Student visa application form
- ✓ Your passport (and previous passports if applicable)
- ✓ A Valid TB Test
- ✓ Your CAS letter
- ✓ Evidence of your Finances
- ✓ Receipts for any tuition fees you have already paid (unless they are written in your CAS)
- ✓ Evidence of your Official financial sponsor (if you are a sponsored student)
- ✓ Evidence you meet the English Language Requirement
- ✓ Documents of previous qualifications if they are listed on your CAS\*
- ✓ Acceptable translations (if any documents are not in English)\*\*
- ✓ Your ATAS Certificate (if applicable)

**If you were being sponsored by either your Government or Scholarship agency within last 12 months but this has now ended, you will need their consent to extend your visa**

*\*If you are a low risk national you come under a [Differentiation Agreement](#) please see section below.*

*\*\*What is an acceptable translation? Each translation must contain:*

- *confirmation from the translator/translation company that it is an accurate translation of the original document*
- *the date of the translation*
- *the full name and original signature of the translator, or of an authorised official of the translation company*
- *the contact details of the translator or translation company*

## Meeting the Maintenance Requirement (10 Points)

If you are a self-sponsored student:

- ✓ You will need to provide evidence\* that you have sufficient funds to pay for your first year's course fees plus money for your living costs
- ✓ Evidence of your bank statements (or other financial documents) must cover a 28 day period and be no more than 31 days old at the time of application

Sponsored Students:

- ✓ If you are a fully sponsored student you will need to provide evidence you are receiving an official financial sponsorship
- ✓ If you are being partially sponsored you will need further evidence of your remaining fees and/or money for living costs

## Evidence of your Finances

- ✓ Evidence of your bank statements (or other financial documents) covering 28 days and no more than 31 days

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old at the time of application\*

- ✓ If you are a sponsored student you will need an official financial sponsorship letter

*\*If you are from a country that is listed under the Differentiation Agreement you do not need to show your finances at the point you apply. However, UKVI reserve the right to request these so you should ensure you have the funds available to you*

## Financial requirements for Self Sponsored Students

If you are a self-sponsored student you will need to be able to demonstrate you have enough money in your (or your parents') bank account in order to make a successful Student visa application. You can also use financial evidence in the name of your dependant partner but **only if your dependant is applying at the same time as you.**

Funds may be held in any form of personal bank or building society account (including current, deposit, savings, pension from which the funds can be withdrawn or investment account) provided the account allows the funds to be accessed immediately.

Funds held in other accounts or financial instruments such as shares, bonds, credit cards, pensions from which the funds cannot be withdrawn immediately, regardless of notice period, will not be accepted as evidence of funds

The maintenance fees for living costs for the main applicant are £1023 per month (from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020) which is capped at 9 months. For example, if you are coming to study for a course for 3 years you will need to demonstrate you have £9207 (£1023 x 9 months) along with the full first year's tuition fee.

If you have paid any of the tuition fee to LJMU and this is either written on the CAS or is demonstrated in an official receipt, you can deduct this from the amount you need to show in your account.

The money needs to be in your account for a minimum of 28 days. The financial evidence you use should be no more than 31 days old at the time you apply.

You can use your parents' bank statements but if you do you must also show your original birth certificate (officially translated if not in English) along with a letter of support from your parents to say they give their consent for you to use their funds.

## Evidence you can use to demonstrate your finances

- Personal Bank Statements
- A Bank Letter
- Certificate of Deposit
- Loan Letter

## Personal Bank Statements

Your financial evidence should:

- have your name (or your parent's/legal guardian's name) and the account number
- be on official stationery or an electronic record
- be printed or electronic (not hand written)
- include the date of the statement
- include information about the bank, such as contact details or a branch code
- show transactions and amount held over time

## Bank Letter

A bank letter should contain information as above in Bank Statements, although rather than transactions the letter can state the balance and the length of time held (in the letter it must state that you have held the required funds for at least a minimum of 28 days).

The bank letter should be on headed paper and provide contact details for the bank and be signed by an official from the financial institution.

## Certificate of deposit

This is a certificate issued by a bank to confirm that the named person has deposited or invested a specific amount of money. Certificates of deposit are accepted if they meet the following requirements:

- *the certificate of deposit must have been issued within 31 days of the date of application*
- *the certificate of deposit shows that you have held the funds for at least 28 days*
- *You must be able to access the funds held at any time*

## Loans

If you are applying for your visa from overseas the loan must be available to you before you travel to the UK. This is unless it is an academic or student loan from your country's national government and will be released to you when you arrive in the UK, or it is a loan for your living costs that is paid to your Higher Education Provider for passing to you.

Any other type of loan will not meet the Student route requirements. If you wish to use money from any other type of loan, you need to transfer the funds to a bank or building society account in your name (or a parent's name) and use one of the other forms of evidence listed above.

## Evidence from more than one bank account

Where evidence from 2 or more accounts is submitted the caseworker should make a decision based on:

- the closing balance of the account that most favours the applicant (providing it falls within the required 31 day period up until the date of application)
- any additional evidence of funds available on the date of that closing balance and at any point during the 28 day period linked to the closing balance used

*If you are applying for the Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme, which is only available to PHD students who are nearing completion of their course you will only need to show £2046 for maintenance, which is £1023 per month x 2.*

## If you are a Sponsored student

An official financial sponsor is defined in the guidance as:

- The UK government
- Your home government
- The British Council
- Any international organization
- An international company (the Home Office has not defined 'international company' but it seems to mean a company with a trading presence (an office) in more than one country)
- A University
- A UK Independent School

If LJMU is sponsoring you and has included details of this on the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) no other documents are needed to show official financial sponsorship

The sponsor letter needs to contain the following information:

- Your name
- The name and contact details of the official financial sponsor
- The date of the letter
- The length of sponsorship
- The amount of money the sponsor is giving you, or a statement that all course fees and living costs will be covered\*
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*\*If your official financial sponsor is not covering all of your courses fees and maintenance, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the additional amount.*

## Enrolling your Biometrics

There are two ways in which to enrol biometrics and you will be told which one applies to you when you apply for your visa: -

- For most applicants you are required to make an appointment at a Visa Application Centre (VAC). At this appointment you will be required to provide your biometrics (your facial photograph and fingerprints).
- Some applicants (usually EEA students) can use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document



## Visa Interview (Also known as a Credibility Interview)

The Home Office will interview most students before granting them immigration permission to come and study in the UK. Your request to attend an interview will be emailed to you, so please keep checking your inbox and 'junk' and 'spam' folders as it may go there.

During the interview the Home Office will ask you a number of questions about your course, why you have chosen to study this and why you have chosen in this location.

The Home Office must be satisfied that you are a genuine student and that your English Language ability is at the correct level. If they are not, your visa may be refused.

During the interview, if you have any connection problems (if virtual) or can't hear it is important that you advise the Home Office staff member of this.

## How long does it take to get a decision?

In most cases you should receive a decision within 3 weeks, however due to Covid processing times may be longer. If you are concerned your application is taking a long time please contact the International Advice Team on [internationaladvice@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:internationaladvice@ljmu.ac.uk).

## Dependants

The Student visa rules only allow some students to bring dependants to join you in the UK

- Postgraduate (RQF level 7 +) students on a full time course of study that is 9 months or longer
- Students receiving financial sponsorship from a government or international scholarship agency for studies on a course of any level that is 6 months or longer
- Students with a Student Visa on a full time course of study at any level of 6 months or longer, and the following four points also apply
  - Your existing student visa is still valid (or expired less than 3 months ago), and
  - Your new student visa application is for a course that is longer than 6 months, and
  - You and your dependent(s) are applying at the same time, and
  - Your dependent(s) already have a student dependent visa or their most recent visa was as a student dependent and it expired less than 3 months before a new application (or born in the UK)

Dependants can only be spouses, civil partners, durable partners or your children

Only children under the age of 18 can normally be your dependant. However, if your child is already in the UK as your dependant but is now over 18, he or she may still be able to extend their visa. Both parents must normally be in the UK.

Spouses, civil partners and durable partners must intend to live with you. Additional requirements may apply.

If you are eligible to bring dependants with you, you must be able to show you have £680 per dependent per month for their living costs for a maximum of 9 months and you will need their documentation as well.

## Differential Evidence Requirements (Low risk nationals)

If you are a national of one of the following countries, there is no need to submit evidence of finances OR qualifications, however the Home Office may ask you at any time to provide them, so you should have all documents ready.

- Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, The Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macao, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United States of America

## Once your Visa Is issued

Your visa is issued as a vignette (sticker) in your passport, which you use to travel to the UK. If your visa is for six months or less your vignette will be valid for your whole stay in the UK.

Otherwise, the vignette in your passport will be valid for 90 days. This is a recent change, under the Tier 4 visa route the vignette was only valid for 30 days. The 90 days will start from 7 days before the course start date on your CAS, or seven days before the date that you specified on your application as your intended date of travel to the UK, whichever is later.

Your vignette will be accompanied by a letter. Keep the letter and bring it to the UK with you as this will have the address of the Post Office where you need to collect your BRP.

Please see more information in the [BRP/Passport Issues section](#) on our website.

Please email [internationaladvice@jmu.ac.uk](mailto:internationaladvice@jmu.ac.uk) if you have further questions

**Always check the most current Student Route Guidance:**

**<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route>**

**Appendix ST:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-st-student>

**Appendix Finance:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-finance>

**Appendix English Language:** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-english-language>

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**Appendix ATAS: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-atas-academic-technology-approval-scheme-atas>**

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